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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of an intervention model on second-grade students who exhibited inappropriate behaviors toward authority figures. Participating in the study were 20 second graders (7 females and 13 males) from 1 classroom in a rural northeast Tennessee school district. Data were collected by means of observation of five targeted behaviors during specified morning and afternoon periods in the classroom. Pre-intervention and post-intervention data were collected for 1 week. The 1-week intervention included the following procedures: (1) a behavior contract signed by students listing inappropriate target behaviors; (2) daily recitation of a pledge to be the best student possible; (3) charting of behavior violations by the classroom teacher; (4) entry into a lottery for a book for students with no infractions; and (5) for students with no infractions for 1 week, an award of a free 100-assignment pass. Data indicated a significant decline in students' inappropriate behavior toward an authority figure following the intervention, and that males exhibited more inappropriate behavior toward an authority figure than did females. In fact, females exhibited no inappropriate behavior toward an authority figure during the classroom observations. (Contains 10 references.) (KB)

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Running head: INTERVENTION MODEL

Effects of An Intervention Model on Second Grade Students Who Exhibit Inappropriate Behavior Toward Authority Figures

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of an intervention model on second grade students who exhibited inappropriate behaviors toward authority figures. The sample for this study was 20-second grade students from an already established classroom in a rural Northeast Tennessee school district. Data collection was primarily through observations of the classroom on five target behaviors during specified times. Data were analyzed using both a Paired-Samples t-Test and an Independent Samples t-Test. Results of the Paired Samples t-Test indicated a significant difference in student behavior toward authority figures with the implementation of the behavior intervention model. The Independent Samples t-Test indicated a significant difference in student behavior between males and females. The findings of the study indicated that the behavior intervention model could be used as a tool to decrease the number of behavior infractions toward authority figures.

Review of the Literature

O'Grady (1998) indicated that behavior problems have become a common problem in classroom. These problems are a reflection of what was going on in the family. Grady suggested that a classroom teacher needed to involve the parents in the development of a better classroom environment.

Public opinion suggests that today's parents do not meet the rigorous standards of effective parenting. The children are not disciplined nor do parents spend enough time with their children. Thus, parents are contributing largely to the discipline problem in classrooms today (Russell, 1997).

Russell (1997) further suggested that regardless of the family environment, the classroom teacher had a greater responsibility in establishing a conducive environment for learning. The classroom teacher should actively involve the student in the learning process and in developing a better environment for learning.

Classroom Management and Intervention Strategies

Collis and Dalton (1990), observed that several teachers that dealt with behavior problems were adequately found to treat students as individuals who were responsible for their own actions and learning. Collis and Dalton believe, "children can learn to take responsibility for both their behavior and learning" (p. 67). This responsibility was the primary principle for the foundation of the classrooms. The setting facilitated an environment in which teachers were able to effectively communicate their belief in children as responsible learners by being assertive; staying clam, positive, and consistent; retaining humor; building positive relationships with the children; negotiating rather than engaging win-lose situations; highlighting proactive learning and teaching strategies; implementing peer support structures; and engaging in an environment of on-going learning. These teachers also believed that a child's behavior was learned through interaction in the environment.

Similarly, Dowd (1997) suggested that children needed to be taught social and communication skills first. After these skills have been acquired, children are able to take responsibility for their actions. Dowd developed a model in which the students were heard and talked about their role concerning what went wrong in the classroom. First, Dowd's class wrote what went wrong in class and what the student's role was in the process. Second, the students wrote what positive influence they could have exerted in the situation. Third, each individual shared their respective ideas with

the class. Last, the class, as a whole unit, discussed the solutions. This process was done in lieu of continuing to look for somewhere else to place the blame. Instead, students were held accountable.

Classroom success can be fostered by the enhancement of positive students' self-concepts (Canfield & Wells, 1976). Weaver presented self-concept as "how we define ourselves" (Weaver, 1996, p. 81). Self-concept is divided into two identities: personal and social. Personal identities are what make people unique individuals, for example, how people see themselves in terms of personal relationships. The social identity is derived from shared memberships in social groups, in other words, relations to religious, socio-economic, or family groups.

According to Dunton (1998), in order to facilitate an optimal learning environment and have control of the classroom, four characteristics must be present. First, the teacher must be organized from the start of school. Second, the teacher must present the class rules and procedures in a positive manner. Third, the attitude of the teacher must be of interest in the students as individuals. Dunton's last characteristic is for the teacher to believe in the students. If the teacher took time to know the students and student goals and aspirations, the student would have more

faith in themselves.

Likewise, by putting faith into students' aspirations, the teacher allows the students to take responsibility for their actions and allows them to devise a consequence schedule for misbehavior. More than likely, the consequences that the students devise are harsher than those the teachers impose (Latham, 1998).

In addition, classroom teachers need to be flexible to meet the needs of the students. Berger (1998) experimented with allowing students the freedom to have "time off the schedule" when the student could substantiate the benefit to their education. As a result, when a child made a breakthrough in learning material, the child could be permitted time to further explore the new material.

In conclusion, when proper learner-centered techniques are established in classroom, learning can be fun and uninhibited. Students need structure in the classroom and be made responsible for their own behaviors. Also, teachers must familiarize themselves with behavior modification techniques such as positive reinforcement in order to foster effective learning (Callopy & Green, 1995).

Methodology and Procedures

The population for this study came from an elementary school in a Northeast Tennessee county. The school had an approximate enrollment of 600 students and 43 faculty members serving kindergarten through eighth grade. The school was in a rural setting with students of varying socioeconomic classes.

The sample for this study was made up of 20-second grade students who were in an established classroom. The class consisted of 7 female students and 13 male students. The classroom had been established from the start of the 1998-1999 school year. Inappropriate behavior was a significant source of frustration in this classroom.

The principle method that was used to collect data was through observations. The students were asked to sign a behavior contract for the week of the intervention. The contract listed inappropriate target behaviors that were expressed in the classroom. Observations of behavior were made from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. each day. Violations of the target behaviors were charted on a behavior chart kept by the classroom teacher. After the three-week observation period the researcher

tallied the results and entered them into SPSS, a computerized statistical program, for data analysis.

Procedures

The first portion of this research project was to layout a proposal of the steps that would be required to complete the research project. The proposal included a behavior contract with specific target behaviors. This proposal was given to the elementary school's principal for permission to be granted to begin the data collection process in the classroom. After permission was granted, the children were observed for five consecutive school days. During that time, the classroom teacher recorded behaviors designated as inappropriate by the behavior contract for the intervention process.

The classroom teacher for five consecutive school days implemented the intervention. Misbehaviors, as defined by the behavior contract, were recorded. The procedures for the intervention consisted of introducing a behavior contract for the students to sign and adhere to. Each morning, following the pledge to the American Flag and moment of silence, the children recited a pledge to be the best student possible. The pledge was posted in the room and was recited as follows: "I can be successful. I can do the things I set my mind to do. I will do my personal best at everything I try to do today and everyday. I will be the best that I can be, because I am somebody." At the end of the day, those children whose names were not charted for misbehavior put their name on a slip of paper and put it into the classroom lottery box. From the lottery box, classroom helpers were chosen. Furthermore, each day the child was not charted for misbehavior, the student was permitted to sign Leo's (the classroom lion) "No lion, I'm tryin'" notebook. At the end of the week those students who had no infractions for the week were awarded a free 100-assignment pass for math, reading, language, and spelling (it could not be used on a test). In addition, those students with no infractions put their name in a drawing for a free book. Finally, the children who were not charted for

misbehavior recited part 1 of the afternoon pledge: "I have been successful today because I did my personal best in everything I tried to do. I did my best because I believe in myself and what I can accomplish if I try. I am the best I can be because I believe I am somebody." For part 2 of the afternoon pledge, all of the children recited: "Tomorrow is a new day. I will come to school ready to do my best work and continue to become the best person I can be because I am somebody."

Last, the intervention was withdrawn, and the students' behaviors were observed and recorded for the last five-day period. The data for three weeks were compiled and analyzed.

Results

Research Questions

Two research questions and related hypotheses guided the analysis of the research data. The questions were analyzed at .05 level of significance.

1: Is there a significant difference in student behavior toward authority figures with the implementation of a behavior intervention model?

2: Is there a significant difference in student behavior between males and females?

T- tests for dependent and independent samples were conducted to test the hypotheses associated with the research questions. A significant difference was found on The students behavior toward authority figure after the intervention model (t=4.83, df=19). Results are displayed in Table 1. Similarly, a significant difference was found between males and females (t=2.62, df=19). Results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 1

Paired Samples t-Test on Student Behavior

Period	M	SD	df	t-Value
Week 1	11.90	13.10	19	4.827*
Week 2	6.70	8.47		

Note. * p <.05

Table 2.

Independent Samples t-Test on Males and Females

Period	M	SD	df	t-Value
Male	11.23	11.54	6.0	2.62
Female	00.00	00.00		

Discussion

The results of the Paired Samples t-Test indicated a significant difference in student behavior with the implementation of the behavior intervention model. In addition, the Independent Samples t-Test indicated a significant difference existed between males and females with the implementation of behavior intervention model.

Rejecting both null hypotheses suggests that implementing the behavior intervention model had a significant bearing on student behavior toward authority figures. After the behavior intervention was implemented students were more likely to have fewer infractions on behavior expectations. These findings are consistent with those of Latham (1998). He found in his review that classrooms employing behavior strategies that produce positive results would be instrumental in negating misconduct and classroom interruptions.

Conclusions

The research hypotheses suggested that the behavior intervention model should be implemented to reduce the frequency of behavior infractions. The data used in this study supported these hypotheses. These findings conclude that students have fewer behavior infractions when the

behavior intervention model was employed in the classroom.

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